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Mrs. Hoops-Hooper and the Hindu

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
CHICAGO

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MRS. HOOPS-HOOPER AND THE HINDU

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

MARY MONCURE PARKER

AUTHOR OF

e Old Oaken Bucket," "Shadows," "Jolly Monologues," "Merry Monologues," Etc.

CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

Mrs. Hoops-Hooper and the Hindu

To Be Played By Twelve Women.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Hoops-Hooper.....*An Earnest Truth-Seeker*
Geraldine Hoops-Hooper .*Her Unenlightened Daughter*
Mrs. High Warbler.....*With an Artistic Voice*
Mrs. F. A. D. Rusher.....*With an Artistic Sense*
Mrs. Vere Leeb.....*With an Artistic Pen*
Mrs. A. Dabbler.....*With an Artistic Urge*
Miss Maude Innit.....*With an Artistic Mind*
Mrs. Up-to-Date.....*With an Artistic Soul*
Annie Flanigan.....*A Temperamental Cook*
Mrs. Nicolo Cosmo.....*An Unhappy Wife*
Ching Loo.....*An Oriental House Boy*
Sarabanda Sang .....*A Torchbearer of Truth*

Scene—*The Living Room of the Hoops-Hooper Home.*

Time—*The Present.*

Time of Playing—*About Thirty-five Minutes.*

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TYPES AND COSTUMES.

Mrs. Hoops-Hooper—Middle aged; well gowned for a small afternoon affair, in modern dress.

Geraldine Hoops-Hooper—A young girl about 16 or 18; wears a street coat and hat which she lays aside, disclosing a pretty gown, suitable for street or an afternoon affair.

Maude Innit—A young woman in a pretty, modern, up-to-date frock and hat.

Mrs. Warbler, Mrs. Rusher, Mrs. Leeb, Mrs. Dabbler, Mrs. Up-to-Date—Smartly gowned society women of any age, supposedly between 35 or 45—or older or younger, according to the players. As the time is supposed to be the fall of the year, light fur scarfs and wraps may be worn. A variety of colors is attractive on the stage.

Sarabanda Sang—A Hindu; wears a man's long Hindu robe, preferably light and embroidered, with a turban wrapped about the head. The robe may be elaborate or simple. This character must be taken by a tall and sedate person, and the skin must be darkened. (This part may be taken by a man or woman.)

Annie Flanigan—A young, pert, up-to-date maid, wearing clothes that are an attempt at fashion, with a grotesque twist. She carries a suitcase.

Mrs. Nicolo Cosmo—An Italian woman; wears a full skirt, bright colored apron, handkerchief about the neck, shawl and big hoop earrings. Her hair is black, parted in the middle and very smooth. Her skin should be slightly darkened.

Ching Loo—A Chinese house boy, with pigtail; wears Chinese coat and trousers (man's outfit), of silk or cotton. Should be played by a small, slight person. The skin must be yellowed with make-up. (This part may be taken by woman or man.)

NOTES ON STAGING.

The time of the play is the present and the costumes are modern.

The two parts supposedly for men may be easily taken by women. This play was written for a woman's club and was successfully produced with women constituting the entire cast. The Hindu character was taken by a tall woman, the Chinese character by one who was smaller and slight. The complexions were darkened with harmless grease paints of the appropriate hues. The Chinaman is of the old-fashioned, conservative type and wears a queue. This makes the character more in keeping and picturesque, as well as affording good contrast to the modern society gowns of the rest of the characters in the play. The Hindu costume also gives a picturesque touch.

In order to make any play successful, the lines must be correctly given and cues watched, so that the play may move with spirit and dash. "Asides" must be given in a loud voice so that audience may understand. This is stage license, of course.

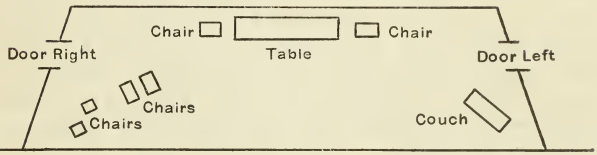
The action must be lively. All the exits and entrances have been carefully studied to avoid any stage waits.

This play meets a demand for plays that are up-to-date for women.

STAGE PROPERTIES.

Living room table.
Four light chairs.
Two large chairs.
Couch or davenport holding four persons.
Tea cart.
Two small trays.
Bell on table.
Eight cups and saucers.
Cream and sugar set.
Plate with cookies.
Tea pot (need not be filled).
Incense and incense jar.
MRS. HOOPS-HOOPER'S handbag, containing money, on table.

STAGE PLOT.



Use the entrances as marked by the author, as the play is worked out in this way. Door right leads on into the house. Door left leads to street entrance. Both doors have interior backings. Mrs. Cosmo enters from right as she is supposed to have come in through the kitchen.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.,* center; *R. C.,* right center; *L.,* left; *R. D.,* door right; *L. D.,* door left; *up stage,* away from footlights; *down stage,* near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

MRS. HOOPS-HOOPER AND THE HINDU

SCENE: *The living room of the* HOOPS-HOOPER *home. An attractive boxed interior, with doors up R. and L., supposed to lead on into the house and toward the street entrance respectively. A library table up C., against flat, with a light chair on either side. An incense jar and a bell on the table. A commodious overstuffed couch or davenport down L. C. Two large chairs and two small chairs naturally arranged down R. C. If the couch is too small to hold four persons easily, more chairs will be needed. Other properties as desired, to complete the set. This is the home of people of means, and the scene should reflect quality and a fair degree of taste.*

At the rise of the curtain CHING LOO *enters R., crosses and exits L.* ANNIE FLANIGAN, *in hat and coat and with suitcase in hand, enters L. almost immediately, followed by* CHING LOO. *She turns and stares at him in amazement.*

ANNIE. For the love of Mike, and phwat kind of a j'int have I struck? A Chink in pajamas!

CHING LOO. Ally—ki-yi—koo-koo. Havey tlair. (*Points to chair.*)

ANNIE. Begorry! Ye sound loike a cuckoo clock. Cut out the chop-suey talk. Is this the home of Mrs. Hoops-Hooper?

CHING LOO. Les. Havey tlair. She come. (*Exits R.*)

(ANNIE *gazes after him and crosses L.*)

ANNIE. Hiven hilp me! I'll not dismiss me taxi till I find out if this is the right place. It looks all right but the Chink—an' thin the quare name of her—Hoops-Hooper—like the whoopin' cough.

MRS. HOOPS-HOOPER *enters R.*

MRS. HOOPER. You wish to see me?

ANNIE. Sure, I came from the intilligences office and

you were high ricomminded to me. But I don't want to run into no Chink j'int and be murdered.

MRS. HOOPER. Why, what on earth do you mean? You must be careful what you say.

ANNIE. Now, jist a minute. It's me is careful, spakin' to nobody if I knows I'm right. Me gittin' $30 a wake fer cookin' only an' don't have to worrit about places which is always comin' thick and fast. I understood you was in great nade of a lady to cook.

MRS. HOOPER (*hastily*). Yes, yes. I do wish some one at once. I meant no offence. Have a chair. (*Motions to a seat.*) (MRS. HOOPER *sits R.,* ANNIE *on couch, L.*) My cook left in a hurry as her mother was ill, and my second maid is ill too. I am expecting a few friends shortly. You need not worry about Ching Loo. He is my house man. I brought him from California. He will not bother you at all.

ANNIE. Sure, I ain't raley afraid of him much. That is, I'd pull the pigtail offen him if he worrited me.

MRS. HOOPER (*in a conciliatory tone*). You will stay, won't you? May I ask your name?

ANNIE. Miss Annie Flanigan, mum.

MRS. HOOPER. Well, Annie—

ANNIE (*interrupting*). *Miss* Flanigan, plaze.

MRS. HOOPER. Miss Flanigan, you were highly spoken of at the office and I wish you to stay. You can send for your trunk later.

ANNIE. Well, I don't know about stayin'—

MRS. HOOPER. I will give you $35 a week.

ANNIE. All right. I'll try it, mum. It sames loike a nice lookin' place—barrin' the Chinyman.

MRS. HOOPER. Ching Loo will dismiss your taxi. (*Rises, goes to table and touches bell.*)

CHING LOO *enters R.*

ANNIE (*rising*). Sure the taxi mon won't onderstand the talk of him. I want to pay him.

MRS. HOOPER. I will attend to that. Here, Ching, pay the taxi driver. (*Gives him money from her handbag*).

CHING LOO. Allee light. (*Exit L.*)

(ANNIE *gazes after him and shakes her head.*)

MRS. HOOPER. Your room is through this way. (*Points to door R.*) You will find the laundress in the kitchen, and she will show you the way to the servants'—

ANNIE (*haughtily interrupting*). Servants!

MRS. HOOPER (*hastily*). I mean she will show you the way to your room.

ANNIE (*picks up suitcase, crosses R., then pauses and turns suddenly*). Is she wan of them Chinks? Bekase if she is—

MRS. HOOPER (*hurriedly*). No, no; certainly not.

Exit ANNIE, *R.*

MRS. HOOPER (*sinks into a chair, R.*). Oh dear! Oh dear!

Enter GERALDINE, *L., in street costume and carrying a copy of a fashion magazine.*

GERALDINE. I met Ching Loo in the hall. He says we have a new cook. (*Throws hat and coat on the couch and sits on couch.*)

MRS. HOOPER. Yes, thank heaven. Or—I don't know whether I want to thank heaven or not. She seems very independent. But they tell me she is a wonderful cook. And anyhow, I don't dare to offend her.

CHING LOO *enters L. and crosses to C.*

MRS. HOOPER (*speaking to him as he is at C.*). Ching Loo, I want the change.

CHING LOO (*pausing*). No change.

MRS. HOOPER. How much was it?

CHING LOO. Thlee dollar. No change. (*Exit R.*)

(MRS. HOOPER *shakes her head wearily.*)

GERALDINE. They ride in taxis nowadays, don't they?

MRS. HOOPER (*rises and crosses to couch*). Geraldine, dearest, do not throw down your wraps. Run and dress. I am expecting a small coterie of friends this afternoon.

GERALDINE (*jumps up*). Mother! Not another one of

those freak gatherings! (*Takes her wraps from her mother and crosses to C.*)

MRS. HOOPER. Geraldine, you are just like your father. He has no artistic sense at all.

GERALDINE (*leaning against table and facing audience*). Well, Dad and I like a good substantial meal, not tea wafers and temperament.

MRS. HOOPER (*sits on couch with an impatient gesture*). Do not always be thinking of food. The pundit often lives for days on nuts and raisins.

GERALDINE. Goodness gracious! Glad I'm not a pundit. I don't know what that is, but thank fortune I am not it. Dad and I like roast beef, and Dad is especially strong for lemon cream pie. I'm sure he prefers pie to wafers. When have we had a lemon cream pie? Not for an age! Poor old Dad!

MRS. HOOPER. One usually does not serve pie at a tea. Geraldine, I do not wish you to commiserate your father. We have not the same tastes at all. He cares nothing for art nor for classical music, not *even* for good literature. And I certainly do not care for his rough out-of-doors sports. However, he cannot complain of his home comforts, and I intend to retain my own individuality.

GERALDINE. Yes, the poor dear! (*Crosses to chair R.*)

MRS. HOOPER. Geraldine!

GERALDINE (*sits in chair, throwing wraps on chair beside her*). Who is coming this afternoon? Last week we had a long-haired violinist, and the week before a free verse poetess—very verse and very free. I went to sleep when she read her own things.

Enter ANNIE FLANIGAN, *wearing apron and cap.* CHING LOO *follows.*

ANNIE (*angrily*). Sure, mum, I won't hov that Chinymon followin' me around so soft loike, ye can't hear him. I'll l'ave.

MRS. HOOPER (*in a conciliatory tone*). No, no, don't leave, please. I will see that he keeps away.

ANNIE (*to* CHING LOO). The divil take ye! (*Shakes her fist in his face and crosses R.*)

CHING LOO. Ki-yi—kee-yee—koo-koo—

ANNIE (*turning and shaking her finger in his face*). I'll cuckoo you if you don't kape away from me! (*Exit R.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*rising and crossing to table*). Ching Loo, keep away from the new maid. Here's two dollars for you. Keep away from her. Do you understand?

CHING LOO (*nods*). Les. Les.

GERALDINE. Yes, stay away, Ching Loo. She may have the smallpox.

CHING LOO. Smallplox, oh! Oo! (*Exit R., half running*).

MRS. HOOPER (*sits in chair L. of table*). If I can just keep them all right until after today. Oh dear! But there. I must place myself in an attitude of calmness and peace. (*Lifts her arms and stretches them out slowly as if warding off disquieting things.*)

GERALDINE (*who has been examining a fashion magazine, rising and crossing to table*). Oh Mother, here's a love of a frock!

MRS. HOOPER (*closing her eyes for a second*). There. Just a moment, Geraldine. (*Rises and crosses R.* GERALDINE *sits in chair, R. of table.*) Geraldine dear, run and dress.

GERALDINE. This gown will do, mother. I will straighten my hair a little.

MRS. HOOPER (*crosses toward R. D. and turns*). Geraldine, don't be late.

GERALDINE. No, mother.

CHING LOO *enters R., crosses and exits L.*

MRS. HOOPER. Some one is coming.

GERALDINE. I'll be there in a minute, mother.

(*Exit* MRS. HOOPER.)

(GERALDINE *hums a popular air and looks over a book.*)

Enter MAUDE INNIT, *L., followed by* CHING LOO, *who crosses back of the girls as they greet each other, and exits L.*

MAUDE. Hello, dearie.

GERALDINE (*jumping up*). Oh, Maudie, so glad to see you! (*They kiss.*)

MAUDE. Your mother asked me to run over this afternoon to hear the pundit.

GERALDINE. The which?

MAUDE. Why, the great Hindu teacher. What's his name—er—Sarabanda Sang, who is going to give a talk this afternoon. (*They sit together on the davenport.*)

GERALDINE. So that's this afternoon's freak. Now I know what mother meant by the pundit.

MAUDE. Why, Geraldine! Haven't you heard of him? He is lecturing at all the clubs and private homes. Your mother was fortunate to secure him, and it was perfectly ducky of her to ask me.

GERALDINE. Maude, you know that is just a pose. You will be bored to death. Come on, let's try this new step. (*Jumps up humming a popular air and pulling* MAUDE *to her feet. They dance half across the stage, stop and laugh.*)

MAUDE. I think you ought to be practicing this step. La, la—la, la—(*humming the Lohengrin wedding march, takes slow steps to tune, back toward couch.*)

GERALDINE (*follows with a stately step or two, humming the march*). I know I shall trip. (*They both laugh merrily.*)

Enter MRS. HOOPER, *R.*

MRS. HOOPER. Sh, girls! Not so loud. We must have an atmosphere of calm for the pundit.

MAUDE (*crosses to* MRS. HOOPER). Oh, Mrs. Hooper, it was so dear of you to ask me this afternoon. (*They greet each other.*)

GERALDINE (*seated on couch, L.*). How much do you have to pay this side-show specimen, mother?

MRS. HOOPER. Do not be impertinent, child. Money is a small thing compared with the lessons he teaches.

U. OF ILL. LIB.

GERALDINE (*laughing*). I'll wager he doesn't think so. (*Rising and crossing back of* MAUDE *and* MRS. HOOPER, *who stand C.*) Excuse me, Maudie dear. (*Picks up hat and coat from chair, R.*) I have to fuss up a bit. (*Exits R.*)

MRS. HOOPER. That child! Maudie dear, pardon me if I do not talk. I want to place a zone of quiet about myself for a moment or two. I had a seance with the new cook when I asked her to assist in serving this afternoon. This has been a strenuous day.

MAUDE. I am so sorry. (MRS. HOOPER *crosses to couch and straightens pillows.*) Let me help you, may I?

MRS. HOOPER. You might light the incense.

(MAUDE *goes to table.* MRS. HOOPER *follows to table.*)

CHING LOO *enters R., goes to door L. Enter* MRS. RUSHER, *L.*

MRS. RUSHER. How do you do, Mrs. Hooper.

MRS. HOOPER (*turns, shakes hands*). How do you do, Mrs. Rusher. (*They take a step or two down C.* CHING LOO *exits back of them, R.* MAUDE *crosses back of chairs, R.*)

MRS. RUSHER. Am I the first?

MRS. HOOPER. No, there is Miss Innit.

MRS. RUSHER (*bows to* MAUDE *and continues talking to* MRS. HOOPER). Well, my dear Mrs. Hooper, I am simply overjoyed at the prospect of hearing that wonderful Hindu. How fortunate that you secured him.

CHING LOO *crosses from R. and exits L.*

MRS. HOOPER. I know you will like him. "Like" is a weak word. He is hypnotic in his influence—that is, he would be were he not so sincere. I would say that he is almost a psycho-psycho-analyst, if one may use the term. I have not been the same woman since I met him.

MRS. RUSHER. I expect to be greatly enlightened. And how lovely for these young girls to hear him. It will be so beneficial, I am sure. (*Crosses R. and greets* MAUDE, *sitting in middle chair, R.* MRS. HOOPER *stands C., to receive her guests.*)

CHING LOO *enters L.*

CHING LOO (*announcing*). Another ladlee.

MRS. HOOPER. Ching Loo! (*Motions him to exit. He crosses back of her and exits R.*)

MRS. VERE LEEB *enters L.*

MRS. HOOPER. Oh my dear Mrs. Vere Leeb. (*They shake hands.*) How are you? Pray do not mind Ching Loo's crudities. I cannot break him of them.

MRS. LEEB. Do not try, my dear. He is so refreshing! I adore the unusual. Commonplace things bore me to distraction.

MRS. HOOPER (*turning to the others*). You know Mrs. Rusher and Miss Innit, I believe.

(*They greet one another.* MRS. LEEB *sits in first chair, R., up stage.*)

MRS. RUSHER. Delighted to meet you again, Mrs. Vere Leeb. I have had the pleasure of hearing you read some of your lovely lines. Who is your publisher?

CHING LOO *enters R., crosses and exits L.*

MRS. LEEB. As yet, my dear, I have not trusted my things to cold print. That seems so sordid and commercial.

CHING LOO *enters L.*

CHING LOO (*announces*). Two ladlee.

MRS. HOOPER. Ching Loo! (*Motions him to leave. He exits R.*)

Enter MRS. HIGH WARBLER *and* MRS. A. DABBLER, *L.*

MRS. HOOPER. My dear Mrs. Warbler; and you, Mrs. Dabbler. I am so pleased to see you.

MRS. WARBLER. I am delighted to be able to come, as I have a cold and was afraid to expose my voice.

MRS. RUSHER (*aside*). It is not very much to expose.

MRS. DABBLER. And I, too, was worried. My second maid—

MRS. HOOPER. Left, of course. That is the general cry.

(MRS. WARBLER *crosses R. and greets* MRS. RUSHER *and* MRS. LEEB *during the conversation.*)

MRS. DABBLER (*to* MRS. HOOPER). Yes, but I would come. I can hardly wait to hear this great psycho-analyst—er—what is his name?

MRS. HOOPER. Sarabanda Sang.

MRS. DABBLER. Oh, yes; Sarabanda Sang.

MRS. WARBLER (*to* MRS. LEEB). My dear, I have something to tell you. (*They cross to couch, R., and stand a moment as if talking.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*to* MRS. DABBLER). I hope you may hear all of his lectures. (*Turning to* MRS. LEEB.) You know Mrs. Vere Leeb, Mrs. Dabbler.

(MRS. DABBLER *and* MRS. LEEB *exchange greetings. They stand a moment and then sit on the couch.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*crosses R. and sits in chair by* MRS. RUSHER). I hope you too may be able to attend the new course of lectures by the psychologist. He is such an inspiration.

GERALDINE *enters L., and stands at her mother's chair.*

MRS. RUSHER. Indeed, I hope to do so. And here is your lovely daughter! I hear news of you, my dear. Your engagement was announced while I was away.

GERALDINE (*standing by her mother's chair*). Yes, Mrs. Rusher.

MRS. RUSHER. And are you to marry a great artist?

GERALDINE. Heaven forbid!

MRS. HOOPER. Geraldine! Geraldine, dear, we will serve tea now.

(GERALDINE *exits R.*)

MRS. HOOPER. Ladies, we are to serve tea now, as the pundit wishes silence when he breathes forth his great truths.

(MRS. DABBLER *crosses to* MRS. RUSHER.)

Enter GERALDINE *and* CHING LOO, *the latter pushing a tea cart.* MRS. HOOPER *crosses to table.*

MRS. DABBLER. How do you do, Mrs. Rusher. (*Sits in chair, R.*). I have not had the opportunity of speaking to you before. You had an enjoyable trip, I presume?

MRS. RUSHER. Simply splendid.

CHING LOO (*to* GERALDINE). Me no got smallplox.

(*The ladies look at one another in surprise.*)

GERALDINE. Say nothing about the smallpox, do you hear? (*Business.*) Here's a dollar. I was only joking.

CHING LOO. You jokee?

GERALDINE. Yes, stupid. (*Motions him to go.*)

CHING LOO. Les, you jokee. (*Exit R.*)

GERALDINE (*sits at table, R.*). Oh, Maudie, will you assist us? (MAUDE *crosses to table.*)

(*The ladies begin to chatter and laugh audibly. The scene must be lively and natural. Inconsequential chatter continues during the serving of the tea, the women talking briskly among themselves, and the sounds coming to the audience as a confused murmur. The performers must "fake" this chatter to make the effect natural. Meanwhile there is the following action*: MAUDE *crosses L. to* MRS. WARBLER, *with a tea cup, then to* MRS. LEEB, *while* GERALDINE *goes to* MRS. RUSHER, *R.* MRS. HOOPER *pours tea.* MAUDE *passes tea to* MRS. DABBLER *and cake to* MRS. LEEB, *then goes to table and hands cup to* MRS. RUSHER. MRS. LEEB *crosses R. to* MRS. RUSHER *and sits in small chair down stage.* MRS. HOOPER *rises and crosses to small chair extreme R., talking with* MRS. LEEB *and* MRS. RUSHER. MAUDE *and* GERALDINE *sit at table drinking tea.* MRS. DABBLER *comes to table and talks a moment, putting down her tea cup.* MAUDE *rises and goes to* MRS. WARBLER, *who rises holding tea cup. They chat, and* MRS. RUSHER *crosses to* MAUDE *and* MRS. WARBLER, *L.* MRS. DABBLER *goes to* MRS. LEEB *and stands talking to* MRS. HOOPER *and* MRS. LEEB, *R.* GERALDINE *takes* MRS. LEEB'S *cup.* MRS. LEEB *crosses again, L.* MRS. WARBLER *crosses to* MRS. HOOPER *and* MRS. DABBLER, *R.* GERALDINE *takes* MRS. WARBLER'S *cup and goes to table.* MAUDE *takes* MRS. RUSHER'S *cup and crosses to table, then back to couch. All during the tea scene there must be laughter and chatter, just as at any tea. The conversation may be any natural conversation, snatches of it heard now and then by the audience. The action must*

be lively and not prolonged. GERALDINE *exits, R., with a small tray.*)

ANNIE FLANIGAN *enters R. and rushes C.*

ANNIE (*in a loud tone*). Sure I'm crazy mesilf wid thot Chinymon always talkin' about the smallpox. I ain't got no smallpox.

(*The ladies become quiet and gaze at* ANNIE, *then look at one another.* MRS. HOOPER *hurries to* ANNIE.)

CHING LOO *enters R., crosses back of the ladies and exits L.*

MRS. HOOPER. All right, Annie, I'll straighten everything out after a while. Don't mind Ching Loo. (*Gently pushes* ANNIE *to R. D.*)

ANNIE. I'm liable to kill him yet! (*Exit R.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*coming C.*). Ladies, do pardon my new maid.

(*Guests are seated.* MRS. RUSHER, MRS. LEEB *and* MAUDE *on couch, L.,* MRS. LEEB *in the middle and* MRS. RUSHER *down stage.* MRS. DABBLER *sits in large chair up R., and* MRS. WARBLER *in middle chair, R.* GERALDINE *stands at R. of table.*)

CHING LOO *re-enters L. and comes C.*

CHING LOO. Another ladlee!

MRS. HOOPER. Ching Loo! (*Motions him to leave and he exits R.*)

MRS. UP-TO-DATE *enters L.*

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. My dear. I do hope I am not late. I was detained.

MRS. HOOPER. You are in plenty of time, Mrs. Up-to-Date. We are serving tea, as the pundit wishes silence around him when he breathes forth his truths. (*To* GERALDINE.) Geraldine, dear, serve tea to Mrs. Up-to-Date.

GERALDINE (*comes forward with a cup for* MRS. UP-TO-DATE). Have some tea, Mrs. Up-to-Date.

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. Geraldine, I am so pleased to hear the news. My dear Elsie has so many sweethearts she can

not really decide between them. She's so popular, you know.

GERALDINE. Yes, Mrs. Up-to-Date. (*Crosses to* MAUDE *and sits on couch.*)

MRS. UP-TO-DATE (*stands C. with tea cup*). How do you do, ladies. Oh, Mrs. Dabbler, I am surprised to see you here. I thought you cared for nothing but bridge.

MRS. DABBLER. I do get time to read the papers occasionally, but as yet I have not seen the announcement of your daughter Elsie's engagement.

MAUDE (*to* GERALDINE). Those two are like tinder boxes when they get together.

(MRS. UP-TO-DATE *turns with a shrug, goes back to tea table and sits in chair R. of table.* MRS. HOOPER *is in chair L. of table.*)

MRS. DABBLER. I am so anxious to hear Mr. Pundit, Mrs. Hooper.

MRS. UP-TO-DATE (*sarcastically*). Oh, my dear. It is not *Mr.* Pundit, it is *the* pundit. A little like professor, or teacher—or something.

MRS. DABBLER. You do not seem to know yourself. I shall call him *Mr.* Pundit if I wish.

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. Oh, very well. (*Puts cup down and goes back of* MRS. RUSHER'S *chair, as* MRS. HOOPER *rises and goes to* MRS. LEEB.)

MRS. HOOPER. While we are waiting, will you not favor us with one of your bits of free verse, Mrs. Vere Leeb?

MRS. LEEB. Why, really—I have a cold, my dear. I—don't believe—

MRS. UP-TO-DATE (*to* MRS. WARBLER). She's dying to give one. (*She is standing, back of* MRS. WARBLER *and* MRS. DABBLER.)

MRS. WARBLER. Oh, please do favor us, Mrs. Vere Leeb.

(MRS. UP-TO-DATE *sits in chair down R.* MRS. HOOPER *is seated on couch, L.*)

MRS. LEEB. Well, if you insist. (*Rises, takes center of stage and recites dramatically.*)

Great columns of smoke
Come forth from the chimneys.
Black, black smoke,
And soot falls,
How it falls!
In the alleys bugs crawl
And garbage molders,
Reeking odor, reek and reek,
But Spring is coming.
The little onions are sprouting,
"Wait," they cry, "we are coming too,
And then let them look to their laurels.
Those city odors!
We, the onions, are coming
Out of the moist earth.
We, the onions, are coming!"

(*Bows as all applaud.*)

MAUDE (*ecstatically*). Isn't she marvelous?

(MRS. LEEB *crosses R. to* MRS. WARBLER *and* MRS. DABBLER.)

MRS. DABBLER (*rises*). That is true poetry. (*Motions to* MRS. LEEB *to take her chair. They both stand a moment.*)

MRS. WARBLER. Yes, it is much more virile than mere talk of flowers, of roses and violets or tulips.

CHING LOO *enters R., crosses and exits L.*

MRS. RUSHER. Oh, the old school of poetry is so passé.

(MRS. LEEB *sits.* MRS. DABBLER *stands by her chair.*)

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. No one never reads Byron or Shelley nowadays.

CHING LOO *enters L.*

CHING LOO (*pausing at C., announces*). Man in night shirt.

MRS. HOOPER. Ching Loo!

CHING LOO *exits R.*

MRS. HOOPER (*rising*). Ladies, calm yourselves. He comes. Geraldine, have the remaining things removed. (GERALDINE *exits R.* MRS. HOOPER *motions* MRS. DABBLER *to seat herself on couch.*) Won't you be seated, Mrs. Dabbler? (MRS. DABBLER *crosses and sits on couch.*)

CHING LOO *enters R. and takes out tea cart, R.* GERALDINE *enters R.*

MRS. HOOPER. There must be absolute silence for the pundit, ladies, that we may receive the emanations from the philosopher's great brain. (*Exits L.*)

(GERALDINE *goes to chair extreme R. and sits.*)

MRS. RUSHER. Oh, I am simply wild to hear this Hindu.

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. So am I.

MRS. WARBLER. Sh! She said silence.

MRS. HOOPER *returns from L. and stands C.*

MRS. HOOPER. Sh! Ladies, concentrate! He comes!

SARABANDA SANG *enters from R. and slowly takes C.*

MRS. HOOPER. Dear friends, we are to have the pleasure of hearing the noted Hindu scholar and lecturer, Sarabanda Sang, who has consented to expound to us his wondrous truths and to give to us a glimpse of the light that surrounds him.

(SARABANDA *makes a deep salaam. All are seated except the Hindu.* MRS. HOOPER *sits in chair R. of table.* SARABANDA *stands for a second with closed eyes, then begins in a deep voice. The few gestures that he (or she) makes must be with dignity and grace.*)

SARABANDA. Man we call a finite being, is, was, has been, will be and is yet to be. That which we see is not. Though we see it, we see it not. The soul, that weird, luminous, intangible non-substance, wanders on and on and on (*lifts both arms, moving them outward from the body*). The lower strata of the mind lie beneath the upper strata (*points with one finger toward the ground*), and the upper strata lie above the lower strata (*points upward*), and there is

neither beginning nor ending thereof. (*Pauses, standing with folded arms.*)

MRS. WARBLER. Wonderful!

MRS. RUSHER. Oh, I am so uplifted!

MRS. HOOPER (*to her friends*). Sh! Please!

SARABANDA (*continues, with arms folded*). Consciousness is an animated chamber through which ideas enter the sacred place, the holy of holies (*points upward*), and on the other hand, unconscious ideas form a dim underworld through which the ghosts of ideas flee (*slow gesture with right hand, palm turned outward*), as though fearful of the light. The whole assembly of the soul structure is thus linked in the obscurity of memory. (*Pauses, closes his eyes and stands with folded arms.*)

MRS. LEEB. How illuminating!

MRS. DABBLER. I wish I could understand it, but I don't quite grasp the idea.

MRS. HOOPER. Sh!

SARABANDA (*opens his eyes and continues*). The brain elements set free the currents of energy that run hither and thither (*waves both arms*) stirring up the motor nerves, the successful conjunction of which constitute the flowing stream of consciousness. Thus (*one finger uplifted, touching the other hand in a professorial manner*) the subtle correlation of all the parts reveals to us an intricate process of creative imagination and introspection that lifts the soul seeker (*points upward*), the thirster who drinks at the fountain, into the more rarefied atmosphere untainted by the breath of sordid, plodding creatures (*points downward*) whose faculties are stultified and whose inner consciousness is unawakened. Striving for the ultimate end, this irreducible, this unimaginable mode of thinking explains the conjunction of fundamental capacities. (*Pauses, closes his eyes and folds his arms.*)

MRS. UP-TO-DATE. He is simply marvelous.

MRS. HOOPER. Sh!

SARABANDA (*opens his eyes and continues*). All around us is the ethereal blue (*lifts both arms*). We are but masses

of vaporized ether that float on and on, and the whirling particles perpetually whirl.

(*A great disturbance is heard outside, R.*)

MRS. NICOLO COSMO (*outside, R.*). I go in. I go in!

ANNIE FLANIGAN (*outside, R.*). For hivin's sake, be quiet!

CHING LOO (*outside, R.*). Alley—Ki-yi, Koo-koo!

MRS. COSMO (*outside R.*). I go in. I go in!

(*At the commotion outside all rise, look startled and remain standing by their chairs.* GERALDINE, *who sits in a light chair, extreme R., jumps up and overturns it.* MRS. HOOPER *rises, standing between* SARABANDA *and R. D.*)

MRS. NICOLO COSMO *rushes in.*

MRS. COSMO. I wanta my hosban'. I wanta my hosban'!

MRS. HOOPER (*holding* MRS. COSMO *back*). Ladies, do pardon this intrusion. (*To* MRS. COSMO.) What is the matter? Why do you come here?

MRS. COSMO. I wanta my hosban'. (*Pointing to* SARABANDA.) That is my hosban', Nicolo Cosmo.

(MRS. HOOPER *puts arm out to keep her back.* SARABANDA *looks startled at first, but resumes his calm demeanor and stands with folded arms.*)

SARABANDA. I do not know you, woman.

MRS. COSMO. I do not know you woman! (*Breaks away from* MRS. HOOPER *and rushes to* SARABANDA, *L.*) You say that to your Rosa?

MRS. HOOPER. You are insane. That is the great Sarabanda Sang.

MRS. COSMO. Insane? Crazee, am I? I tell you that is my hosban', Nicolo Cosmo. (*Points to him.*) We live in Ghetto. (*Turns to* MRS. HOOPER, *speaking excitedly.*) A man in Ghetto write him speech an' pay him well to fool the ladees. I no care for that, but he want desert me an' my five leetle bambinos to marry 'nother girl. He no give me da monee, we hongree. But wait I feex him. I have

him arres'! (*Turns to look at* SARABANDA). But see—see ladee—he have gone—he have gone! (*Rushes out L.*)

(*During* MRS. COSMO'S *speech, after she has turned her back upon him, the supposed Hindu drops back with quick, quiet steps and exits L. The ladies are so busy watching his wife they do not notice him go.* MRS. HOOPER *grows faint at* MRS. COSMO'S *exit.*)

MAUDE (*excitedly*). Geraldine! Quick—your mother!

(*All rush towards* MRS. HOOPER. GERALDINE *catches her mother and helps her to chair up stage, L. of table.*)

GERALDINE. Maudie, a glass of water. (MAUDE *rushes out R.*)

MRS. DABBLER. Oh, it's terrible!

MRS. RUSHER. The miserable impostor!

(MAUDE *returns with water.*)

MRS. LEEB. What a shame. Well, I really was suspicious of him from the first.

GERALDINE. Dear friends, do pardon me if I ask you to go. I am so sorry this has happened. I suppose the man must be an impostor. (*She begins to shake hands with* MRS. UP-TO-DATE *and* MRS. DABBLER, *then* MRS. WARBLER, *politely propelling them toward L. D.*) Mother will write to you or call you all up later. (*Shakes hands with* MRS. LEEB *and* MRS. RUSHER.) Goodby. So sorry. Goodby.

(*The ladies exit L., talking in subdued tones.*)

MAUDE. Geraldine, can't I do something?

GERALDINE. No, dear. I will call you up after a while. (*Kisses her goodby.*)

MAUDE. Goodby, dear. (*Exit L.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*when* MAUDE *has gone*). Oh dear, what a disgrace! (*Rises, going to couch, followed by* GERALDINE.) What a disgrace! (*Drops on couch, lying with her face in the pillows.*)

GERALDINE. There, there, mother dear. (*Kneels beside her mother.*)

ANNIE FLANIGAN *enters, R., in hat and coat and with suitcase.*

ANNIE. I'm lavin', mum. I niver could work in sich a place, with Chinks in pajammys and haythen nagers in night shirts. Give me me wages.

GERALDINE. You don't deserve any.

MRS. HOOPER. Geraldine, please pay her. I cannot stand any more.

(GERALDINE *rises and goes to table, picking up her mother's bag.* ANNIE *follows to table.*)

ANNIE. Sure she'll pay me ivry cint. I niver saw sich a place in me life. I'll have the price of me taxi goin' and comin', too.

GERALDINE (*giving* ANNIE *the money*). There, take it and go! (*Goes back and kneels by her mother.*)

ANNIE (*counts the money*). Talk about a fine place. I'll tell the world it's a fine place—not. (*Crosses to L. D.*) Chinks in pajammys and haythen nagers in night shirts. Hivin' hilp us! (*Exits L.*)

MRS. HOOPER (*rising to a sitting posture*). Geraldine, do not tell your father. And please do not let the papers know.

GERALDINE (*smoothing her mother's hair*). Certainly not, mother dear. Don't worry. Try to rest. (MRS. HOOPER *rises and stands C.*) Why, mother, what are you going to do?

MRS. HOOPER. Geraldine, I think I will make your father a lemon cream pie for dinner. Your father loves lemon cream pie and so do you.

GERALDINE. Oh, do you feel able to do that, mother? Shall I help you?

MRS. HOOPER. No, dear. I am better now and I prefer to do it alone. (*Crosses R., pauses and turns.*) Geraldine, we will not even speak of the meeting, dear.

GERALDINE. No, mother dear, certainly not.

MRS. HOOPER *exits R.*

GERALDINE (*walks to table and straightens the cover.*) Dad and the lemon cream pie seem to be in the ascendancy for to night, at least. (*Crosses to couch, straightening pillows.*) Poor mother! It seems too bad to laugh. (*Throws herself upon the couch in a gale of laughter.*)

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